

# South Dakota National Guard

## Public Affairs Office

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## **Unique mechanics keep rocket systems mission ready**

By Staff Sgt. Rachel Korzeniewski – 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CINCU, Romania – The South Dakota Army National Guard's 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion requires the unique skillsets of certain maintenance personnel to ensure their M270A1 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems are mission ready for exercises such as Saber Guardian 17 in Cincu, Romania, July 2-18.

These Soldiers have a rare job in the military as 94P Multiple Launch Rocket System repairers, and without their knowledge, the unit would not have the personnel to repair any maintenance issues with the launchers.

Sgt. Brooks Jacobsen and Spc. Robert McKenney of the battalion's 147th Forward Support Company are just two of four MLRS repairers in the state of South Dakota.

"Our main mission as an Multiple Launch Rocket System repairer is to ensure our launchers are mission capable and ready to fire," said Jacobsen. "If we do not complete our mission, the launcher crews cannot complete theirs."

The repairers utilize different resources to diagnose the exact issue a launcher is having – from speaking with the crews that reported the problem, to the technical manual and maintenance support team.

"Making repairs and resolving issues with the launchers is challenging, but rewarding," said Jacobsen. "A lot of the time you will think the issue is one thing but after trouble shooting and digging a little deeper, you realize it's a completely different problem."

Civilian contractors from Lockheed Martin, an aerospace and defense company, work alongside the repairers if they need additional help with the launcher. The contractors travel with the unit during annual training and fly out to the unit's home station if they're needed throughout year.

"They have been in our place and know what we're going through," said Jacobsen. "They had the same military occupational specialty and help us out a lot."

Soldiers must complete a challenging seven month-long course to become an MLRS repairer. While at the school, they learn how to troubleshoot maintenance problems, identify issues on the launcher and to repair the discovered issues.

"I really enjoy my job," said McKenney. "When we get called to fix a launcher, we never know what we are going to get – the issues are always unique."

Jacobsen's Guard career has benefitted his civilian one as well. He is a robotics and electronics instructor at a technical institute in South Dakota.

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“If it wasn’t for the Guard, I probably wouldn’t have my civilian career,” said Jacobsen. “Being an MLRS repairer got me into my career and I get to teach kids how to do what I love, which is how to be a technician, how to troubleshoot and fix things.”

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High resolution photos are available at [www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard](http://www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard)



**170704-Z-NM086-0017:** U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Mike Graves, 147th Forward Support Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, repairs a M270A1 Multiple Launch Rocket System while participating in Saber Guardian 17 in Cincu, Romania, July 4, 2017. SG17, a U.S. Army Europe-led, multinational exercise, took place in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, July 11-20. The exercise highlights participant deterrence capabilities, specifically the ability to mass forces at any given time anywhere in Europe. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Rachel Korzeniewski)



**170704-Z-NM086-0032:** U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Mike Graves and Sgt. Brooks Jacobsen, 147th Forward Support Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, work together to repair a M270A1 Multiple Launch Rocket System to ensure it is mission ready while the unit is participating in Saber Guardian 17 in Cincu, Romania, July 4, 2017. SG17, a U.S. Army Europe-led, multinational exercise, took place in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, July 11-20. The exercise highlights participant deterrence capabilities, specifically the ability to mass forces at any given time anywhere in Europe. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Rachel Korzeniewski)



**170704-Z-NM086-0050:** U.S. Army Spc. Robert McKenney, 147th Forward Support Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, works to repair an azimuth motor on a M270A1 Multiple Launch Rocket System while participating in Saber Guardian 17 in Cincu, Romania, July 4, 2017. SG17, a U.S. Army Europe-led, multinational exercise, took place in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, July 11-20. The exercise highlights participant deterrence capabilities, specifically the ability to mass forces at any given time anywhere in Europe. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Rachel Korzeniewski)



**170704-Z-NM086-0050:** Maintenance repairers from the 147th Forward Support Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, begin to troubleshoot a M270A1 Multiple Launch Rocket System to discover a maintenance issue while participating in Saber Guardian 17 in Cincu, Romania, July 4, 2017. SG17, a U.S. Army Europe-led, multinational exercise, took place in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, July 11-20. The exercise highlights participant deterrence capabilities, specifically the ability to mass forces at any given time anywhere in Europe. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Rachel Korzeniewski)

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